

### Jon Thomas Rowland

the ground, so Porko scraped it off, and the shit from her old dog, that she never cleaned up after. The dog died, and she moved into a highrise, with an elevator and NO PETS.

Elmo waxed nostalgic. He'd lived in Emile Durkheim longer than anyone else. It was urban archaeology.

He remembered Deaf Dyke who threw the phone book on the floor every night around 3 A.M. He assumed it was deliberate, and she drank. Being deaf, she couldn't have heard it anyway. When Elmo moved in she ignored him, after she learned he was single and didn't even have a girlfriend.

She had several. Walking home with one from THE BOOZE CAN, she noticed the bottle of beer under her leather jacket. When the girlfriend wouldn't give her any, she wrestled the beer away from her. The cops arrested them, and fined the dyke a hundred dollars for drinking in public. They resumed their argument, back in THIRTEEN. The dyke screamed so much, nobody slept on that side of the building. Citizen Hearse disliked dykes when they gave it away FREE to their girlfriends. Elmo heard her screaming again, at the mail box, when she saw the LETTER with the TWO-HEADED EAGLES on the envelope, return address the SIMIAN SANDS....

One of her girlfriends was her predecessor in THIRTEEN. She hung out with her, hoping to get her apartment back. It was probably her, throwing the phone book on the floor. When the dyke got evicted, she tried to take over, but CITIZEN HEARSE never forgave a bad tenant, or knew a good one...

During her heyday Deaf Dyke shared Johnny's apartment with 4 or 5 people. It consisted of one large room that he used as kitchen and livingroom combined, and a small bug-infest bedroom. To access the bathroom, you had to pass through the bedroom. It would have been crowded, without any privacy, everyone using everything and everyone else, and trying to steal the apartment. Johnny'd noticed the damaged door frame, that had been repaired so many times the molding resembled tumescent scar tissue. Underneath the landlord paint was graffiti about legalizing dope.

Johnny's predecessors in THIRTEEN. Elmo remembered other clients in other apartments, but Johnny was getting tired. They were typically in bad health. Elmo watched them decline. Most of them were dead. Dead Guy was already. He'd find someone collapsed on the sidewalk. Then in a wheelchair. Then missing an arm, or a leg. They were usually alcoholic, and diabetic. They died right there, under the Edwardian attributes.

Johnny heard the broom banging the dark-varnished baseboards again and looked out his spyglass, down Peacock Alley.

A paretic irregularity in the gait?

Warfarin! He was so young! He invited him in.

Let's talk, he said. Why hadn't he kept his appointment with the Bluecoats. That unleashed a well-rehearsed tirade of self-pitying excuses. His life was so messed-up right now. He couldn't handle it. He owed everybody money. He was fighting with his mother (and his mother was winning). He wished he was dead.

Johnny said he was sorry, but Warfarin might at least have phoned the Manager, to say he'd be dead....

O, why don't I die right now.